

THE BRISTOL SOROPTIMIST

One of the pleasures of being a Soroptimist, is to be able to organise activities to cover such a wide range of issues. However, this does not preclude having fun and it gave me great pleasure to welcome Deana Stone and two mums from the management board of the Hartcliffe and Withywood Teenage Parents Project at our July visit to Tyntesfield.

It was lovely to resume Soroptimist club activities after the summer break.

Immediately, we were back into the swing of typical Soroptimist activities. September was such a busy month. It gave me great pleasure to present a cheque for £100 to Deana Stone of the Hartcliffe and Withywood Teenage Parents' Project, to support their residential stay at Folly Farm.

On 3 September, we were welcomed at Anna and Ivan Fowler's house for a Pudding and Pimms Party. Luckily the weather held, so we were able to enjoy their lovely garden. £174 was raised to support our long running Learning in Lima project.

That same week, books were being collected for International Literacy Day on 8 September, when we supported a Portishead based charity – Za which collect books for use in a South African community.

On 10 September, Sue Perry, Betty Cook and I attended the Soroptimist International South West and Channel Islands Regional AGM, at Buckfast Abbey Conference Centre. The day

finished with a lovely concert held in the Abbey church by a group called Black Voices.

We welcomed Jo Morris from the Avon Wildlife Trust at our first speaker meeting. She gave us a wonderful presentation on the work of the trust.



President Lynn presenting a cheque for £100 to Deana Stone of the Hartcliffe and Withywood Teenage Parents' Project

As we go to print, we are looking forward to welcoming Shirley Alexander to our next speaker meeting on 10 October. She will become the new Regional President at Conference at the end of October

Final preparations are being made for the fundraising concert on 15 October to support my charity for this year – the Hartcliffe and Withywood Teenage Parents' Project.

Finally, members will be attending the Annual Conference of Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland, being held in Brighton, at the end of the month. I celebrate the fact that there is never a dull moment being a Soroptimist!

President Lynn

Diary Dates

2011

- 15 Oct – Concert by Miscellany and Social Evening
- 18 Oct – A New Members evening
- 27-29 Oct – SIGBI Conference, Brighton
- 28 Oct – Lunch Club, The George, Abbot's Leigh
- 5 Nov – SI Brixham Annual Dinner
- 12 Nov – Region Meeting - Taunton
- 20 Nov – St Austell Annual Lunch
- 5 Dec – Club Christmas Party with entertainment by an award winning quartet from the Great Western Chorus
- 13 Dec – Lunch Club, The Priory, Portbury

2012

- 11 Feb – Region Meeting - Taunton
- 12 Feb – Bath Annual Lunch
- 18 Feb – Cava and Nibbles Party
- 25 Feb – Bridge Day
- 12 Mar – Quiz Night
- 18 Mar – Bristol Annual Lunch
- 1 Apr – Weston-super-Mare Lunch
- 12 May – Region Meeting - Taunton
- 8 Sept – Region AGM - Cirencester

No Women No Peace

In order to show solidarity with Afghan women's rights activists, groups in the UK and internationally are planning candlelit vigils on 31st October, the 11th anniversary of the signing of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which recognises the unique impact of conflict on women and the need for their inclusion in peace building.

Those attending will be wearing green scarves (a symbol used by Afghan women's rights activists). The Bristol vigil will be held at the Arnolfini at 12 noon, organised by the Bristol Fawcett Society in conjunction with No Women No Peace. All welcome. For more information see www.nowomennopeace.org

Music for an Autumn Evening

Miscellany

Saturday October 15th, 7.30 pm

Fairfield School, Fairfield Way, Backwell BS48 3PD

Tickets £8.50

In aid of the Hartcliffe and Withywood Teenage Parents' Project Charity No: 110216

Items for the newsletter to:

sibristol@googlemail.com or mail to
11 Ravenswood Road, Bristol BS6 6BN

Congratulations!

Our warmest congratulations go to Sue Perry, who next month at the Brighton Soroptimist International Federation Conference will become Vice President of South West & Channel Islands Region. She becomes President in 2013. Many members will recall that this is the second time Sue also held this office from 1999-2000. She was President of SI Bristol twice too, in 1996-1997 and again in 2008-2009.



Sue Perry, Regional Vice President Elect

Sue says 'Having been a member of Soroptimist International for over 20 years I am committed to the aims of this unique organisation and want to work to ensure that it is no longer a 'best kept secret' but flourishes, is attractive to the modern business woman and expands to meet the challenges of the 21st century'

Wendy Walden

The Lunch Club.

The next Lunch Club meeting will be at The George, Abbot's Leigh on 28 October.

The Christmas Lunch Club meeting will be at The Priory, Portbury on Tuesday, 13 December, cost £17.95 for three courses. A £5 deposit will be needed to secure your place.

Regional AGM

SI Weston super Mare were warmly congratulated for their Skirting Science event which has won the International Best Practice Award at the conference in Montreal.

The Regional Best Practice Awards were presented to St Austell for work on bias against women, Bridgewater for service and action on violence against women, and Brixham for extensive work in all areas.

Congratulations too for SI Guernsey who have inducted eleven new members during the year. This is the highest number of any club.

There was an interim report from the Regional Treasurer, Vanessa Billing. The main points were:

Full payment for the Regional part of the subscriptions for new members will now be payable for members joining from 1 April - 30 September; half the annual fee is payable for those joining from 1 October - 31 March.

Only two airfares per Channel Island Club (Guernsey and Jersey) will now be covered by the travel pool.

There is now full complement of Regional Officers for 2011-2012.

Liz Morgan-Lewis, SIGBI President, reported that Programme Focus forms are to be revamped.

She also reported back on the International Conference in Montreal.

SIGBI delegates were the largest group at Montreal. Americans were currently being advised not to travel and Japanese members were affected by the tsunami.

Attrition charges of £91,000 had to be paid for the unlet rooms due to smaller numbers. This had been negotiated down from a potential £500,000. This was paid from SI reserves and there will be no levy to members.

Liz said that while SIGBI is now secure financially, SIGBI is concerned about Soroptimist International's finances. The SI Finance report was now at the end of September. SIGBI proposed that a root and branch review of SI be instigated.

SI Programme Director, Reilly Dempsey, and one other member of staff are being paid from reserves.

The new logo was unveiled in Montreal and design work cost £7,000 in total. (Several designs had already been submitted and rejected.) Only SIGBI has adopted it and it should be released for use at the Brighton Conference. The other Federations have decided to keep their current logos. It will be made available to any other Federation who wishes to use it. The branding guidance is being worked up and will cost another £10,000. The old 'Sally' logo will continue to be as our emblem for day to day correspondence, etc.

The new website www.sigbi.org is not yet live.

Regional Officers

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|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| President | Shirley Alexander | (Cirencester) |
| President Elect | Caroline Chubb | (Taw & Torridge) |
| Vice President | Sue Perry | (Bristol) |
| Immediate Past President | Mary McNaughton | (Plymouth) |
| Honorary Secretary | Audrey Taylor | (Brixham) |
| Honorary Treasurer | Vanessa Billing | (Barnstaple) |
| Programme Action Chair & UK PA Committee Rep. | Ann Lamswood | (Brixham) |
| Extension & Membership | Jackie Mosedale | (Yeovil & Sherborne) |
| Benevolent Fund Representative | Sheila Naylor | (Taunton) |
| Federation Councillor | Wendy Plaice | (St. Austell) |

Puddings & Pimms

On Saturday, 3 September, members got together with friends and husbands for a Puddings & Pimms Party at the home of Anna and Ivan Fowler to raise funds for the Learning for Lima project. Sylva von Bomsdorff was present and spoke of her huge gratitude to the Bristol Club for its continued support and to tell of her success in developing her school in Lima. She stated the school began with just five pupils whilst currently she has 120 pupils attending and she has plans to extend the school and its amenities even further. Many members provided a selection of delicious puddings to enjoy with the Pimms, the sun shone and a good time was had by all!

See the www.bristolsorop.org.uk Projects page for pictures from Sylva's school

Wendy Walden



Teenage Parents Project

Lynn and I attended a very interesting evening at the Mansion House on Thursday, 22 September. We were invited by Deana Stone from the Teenage Parents Project and were told that 'They would be presenting'. We paid our £10 each to attend and, not knowing what to expect, we duly arrived at the Mansion House and were offered a welcome glass of wine and later a buffet. We estimated approximately 80/100 people attended and eventually we were led into the main room, where we understood five charities would be presenting their causes to us all.

The Teenage Parents Project was the third presentation and they chose a 'role play' format telling a 'potential' teenager what to expect if she came into the project. It was different and very effective.

After the presentations, we were offered more food and wine and later led back into the same room without the presenters who had to remain in the outer room. Lynn and I were then astonished to

discover that each charity was auctioned with the audience pledging various amounts of money to their chosen charity. Within approximately 40 minutes, a total of almost £25,000 had been pledged. The Teenage Parents Project received the most amount of funds, £5,000. This amount we understand from Deana will fund 108 recognised qualifications for 36 young parents.

The evening was arranged by The Funding Network (TFN) which was founded in 2002. It enables individuals to join together to fund social change projects. It has been described as the marketplace for donors and charities, (a kind of Dragon's Den for charities). TFN has raised over £3 million for over 440 national and international projects via TFN groups around the UK.

Lynn and I were extremely impressed with the evening's event and feel this is an extremely useful organisation through which we can recommend from time to time, the Club's own 'action projects' such as the Za Foundation (see below).

Wendy Walden



President Lynn with Deana Stone and her Assistant Rebecca Jenkins from the Teenage Parents Project,

Obituary

Wangari Maathai, the first African woman recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, died on 25 September 2011. She was 71.

When Maathai founded her Green Belt Movement in rural Kenya in 1977 the concepts of environmental sustainability and protection of the eco-system were hardly recognised around the world. As time went on, her warnings proved accurate. Over 30 years she mobilized poor women to plant 30 million trees.

Maathai won the Nobel Prize in 2004 for combining environmentalism and social activism. During her acceptance speech she said that the inspiration for her life's work came from her childhood experiences in rural Kenya, where she witnessed forests being cleared and replaced by commercial plantations.

A former member of Kenya's parliament, Maathai was the first woman to earn a doctorate in East Africa — in 1971 from the University of Nairobi, where she later was an associate professor in the department of veterinary anatomy. She previously earned degrees from Mount St. Scholastica College in Atchison, Kansas and the University of Pittsburgh.

Participants at the United Nations climate change conference in Durban next month will miss her contribution.

International Literacy Day — 8 September 2011

We celebrated International Literacy Day on the 8 September by supporting the Za Foundation at its Portishead Branch at 36 High Street by donating hundreds of books to send to Nkomazi in South Africa.

The Za Foundation has been established to help support the needs of children and young people in South Africa and their work is focused in the area of Nkomazi near the borders of Swaziland and Mozambique. The area has huge socio-economic problems with an HIV infection rate of almost 40% and unemployment around 70%. Za now works in partnership with communities in South Africa and the United Kingdom to provide support, educational opportunities and resources.

Currently Za is planning a container shipment of books to be converted into a library in Nkomazi to encourage children to read.

This international day aims to mobilise everyone's attention to the urgent need for increased commitment to literacy, worldwide.



SI Bristol members with Za members at the Za Foundation in Portishead, with some of the book collection.

SI Bristol Visit to Tyntesfield

We were lucky to have a lovely day for our summer outing to Tyntesfield. There was a good turn out and Deana Stone and two mums from the management board of the Hartcliffe and Withywood Teenage Parents Project joined our July visit to Tyntesfield.

After the tour of the house and gardens, and a little light shopping, we repaired to Lynn's house. Other Soroptimists joined us here for an excellent lunch



SI Swindon's Visit to Tyntesfield

Valerie Nuttall, organised the SI Swindon's summer outing to Tyntesfield on 6 August. Local Soroptimists were invited.

As Valerie works for the National Trust she always manages to arrange a little extra on these visits and this time we were treated to a fascinating guided walk round the gardens. As well as learning about some of the specimen trees, some of the finest examples of their type can be found in Tyntesfield, we

found about the boating lake and the buildings, and former buildings, in the garden.

The weather was mixed and we all had macs and umbrellas, but as you can see the sun did appear and we managed not to get soaked.

We finished our trip with an excellent lunch in the restaurant, where we benefitted from Valerie's staff discount.



SI Swindon members with our guide and Chris and Helen Davies



All photographs of August visit by Sue Perry

Côte Brasserie

On Wednesday, 28 September a group of Soroptimists and friends met for a meal in the Côte Brasserie in The Mall, Clifton.

This extra chance for us to get to know each other was organised by Wendy Walden. As you would expect from Soroptimists the food was excellent, as was the company. It was a chance for us to catch up on gossip after the long break, but also to meet with volunteers from Za who came along to get to know us better.

WANTED

**Textiles and
old clothing**

to be sold to BTR
in aid of club reserves
Bring to meetings by

Dec 5th

Mary's Meals Update

In response to the East Africa crisis Mary's Meals has teamed up with the African relief agency *Gift of the Givers* to provide around 900,000 meals for those affected by the famine in Somalia.

Until recently, getting aid into Somalia has been difficult due to security concerns, but *Gift of the Givers* – the largest disaster relief organisation of African origin – has been able to gain secure entry and exit. It is estimated that 3.7 million people, almost half the population, in Somalia are now suffering from a humanitarian crisis.

Mary's Meals is appealing for public donations to buy more food to send to East Africa as soon as possible. It is costing the charity just 4 pence to provide one meal.

Mary's Meals is the only daily meal that the children will receive. In some of the nurseries, over the prolonged drought period, the numbers of children

has quadrupled. Farmland is dry and herds of cattle have died. Drought has not been the only reason for the loss of herds. Neighbouring tribes from Sudan and Ethiopia regularly cross the border to steal cattle.

Unexpected rains fell last month, but these were a false hope as they petered out after three days. Before this, there had been no rain since last November. Climate change in East Africa means longer and more severe droughts, higher temperatures and the unpredictability of the seasons.

Mary's Meals is making a difference. 'Now we see all of our children getting better. They get enough to eat and finish nursery happy, and ready to play and help us gather firewood and get water.' Alice, a mother of eight, from Kotopia Nursery, Turkana, Kenya.

www.marysmeals.org.uk — 20 Sept 2011